DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 590 PS 006 579

TITLE	The Unit Approach for Kindergarten: Primary Grades.
INSTITUTION	Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg. Bureau of General and Academic Education.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	12p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Activity Units; *Discovery Learning; Instructional Materials; Kindergarten; *Learning Activities; Primary Grades; *Teaching Guides; Teaching Methods; *Unit Plan

ABSTRACT

The unit approach to instruction in the kindergarten and primary grades is considered as an example of learning by doing. In guiding a unit, the teacher must have thorough basic plans but must be willing to let the students substitute their ideas for hers. Part of the purpose of unit work is to let children discover for themselves what process is best. A list of things that must be done before and during the progress of a unit is presented. A survey is provided of the study of a unit, and 46 topics for kindergarten-primary units are suggested. Activities for unit work using a variety of materials are also suggested. A 13-question evaluation scale for unit work is provided. (KM)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 077590

The Unit Approach for Kindergarten

PRIMARY GRADES

PS 006579

Prepared by
Division of Early Childhood Education
Bureau of General and Academic Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
1972

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Milton J. Shapp, Governor

Department of Education
John C. Pittenger, Secretary

Office of Basic Education
B. Anton Hess, Commissioner
Donald M. Carroll Jr., Assistant Commissioner
for Programs and Services

Bureau of General and Academic Education
John E. Kosoloski, Director

Division of Early Childhood Education
Charlotte G. Garman, Coordinator

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pa. 17126

THE UNIT APPROACH FOR KINDERGARTEN-PRIMARY GRADES

In the kindergarten and primary grades the spirit of the modern school is well exemplified in the unit approach to instruction. Learning by doing becomes a reality as all children in a given group study and work together, each one contributing according to his ability for the ultimate goal of class achievement. Such an approach carries with it not only a sense of responsibility but pride in the mutual end product.

Within the study of a unit, the children are of central importance. What are their interests? What would they like to pursue? What can each do? What is each willing to do? Who is obviously a leader? Who needs encouragement to take the reins at times? It is basically a pupil rather than a teacher-governed process.

An experience unit is quite unique in that it may be thoroughly planned but it rarely turns out as designed. It may find its beginning in just an incidental moment of interest, from a happening or as a by-product of another area of study, but it will still develop as it goes. Child and teacher will wander from the original road into many exciting by-ways of exploration.

To guide the development of a worthwhile unit, the teacher must have thoroughly well-rounded plans but she must also be willing to let children substitute their ideas for hers. One of the more difficult tasks for the teacher is to avoid persuading the children that their ideas are good but hers are better. Part of the purpose of unit work is to let children discover for themselves what process is best. This adds depth to their problem-solving ability. In addition to this, children usually add brisk and ingenious ideas that teachers overlook. It is important to remember, however, that basic plans are the teacher's business. The enrichment, the experimental avenues, the discoveries belong to the children!

When deciding upon a unit, certain approaches seem sensible.

Before the unit starts, the teacher must:

- Define her reasons for teaching the unit.
- Refer to her resource materials for ideas and information.
- Collect books, informational and audiovisual materials as a starter for children's use.
- Show the younger children what library facilities are available.
- Plan the basic concepts that should evolve from the unit.
- List the basic, new and difficult vocabulary pertinent to the unit.
- Select a few activities that may lead children to suggest others.
- Prepare an interest-catching introductory activity.

After interest is initiated, children and teacher can:

- Discuss approaches to the unit study.
- Decide on the major problems to be investigated.
- Plan daily activities.
- Share ideas, findings and activities.
- Evaluate each day's progress making suitable changes for the ensuing day.
- Assess basic learnings acquired.

As it progresses, every unit should involve:

- Art, both individual and group.
- Music, rhythms and games.
- Reading (for information and pleasure).
- Speaking and listening.
- Literature (stories, poems and anecdotes).
- Construction work (individual and/or group).
- Social concepts.
- Mathematics.
- Science, where feasible.
- Creative activities of many kinds.

As the children work together, they learn, in varying degrees, to:

- Listen to others.
- Think for themselves.
- Express opinions.
- Give and receive criticism.
- Plan and evaluate.
- Take part in discussions.
- Give reports or short talks.
- Work together on committees or in groups.
- Accept others' viewpoints.
- Settle their differences amicably.
- Make good use of their time.
- Develop self-discipline.

THE STUDY OF A UNIT - A QUICK SURVEY

I. How does a unit begin?

A. From a prescribed curriculum in any subject area.

B. From the interests, abilities and accomplishments of different groups within the classroom.

C. From teacher-sponsored ideas.

II. Where do we get materials?

A. From the school library where the librarian will select and collect books on various levels and topics pertinent to the unit.

B. From your room library built through supplemental funds.

C. From the public library.

D. From books the children bring to share.

E. From free or inexpensive sources.

III. What preparation is necessary?

A. Survey of the backgrounds and concepts of the children.

B. Establishment of mutual standards for activities.

C. Development of the initial plans.

IV. How can the unit be introduced?

A. Through a field trip.

B. Through a movie or film strip.

C. Through the visit of a resource person well versed in the subject at hand.

D. Through a display of books, realia and other materials.

V. How is the class organized for study?

A. Through committee groups selected from mutual interest levels.

B. By children working on individual subjects and projects.

VI. What procedures can be utilized?

A. Discussions to share information and to plan for extension of activities or for follow-ups.

B. Assimilation of facts as children watch each other organize and work.

C. Charts and pictures to extend experiences and stories to all.

D. More films to define experiences.

E. Exhibits either teacher-made and child-inspired, or child-made and teacher-guided.

F. Field trips, demonstrations, dramatized experiences, recordings and ETV.

VII. What is the role of the teacher in unit study?

A. An observer and guide.

B. A coordinator when needed; the "steering committee", occasionally.

C. A watchful "eye" for special areas of need.

D. The original planner of basic ideas and concepts.

SUGGESTED KINDERGARTEN-PRIMARY UNITS

1. Ready For School.
2. On A Rainy Day.
3. Colors Can Be Fun.
4. Fall Is Here.
5. Getting Ready For Winter.
6. Indians Now And Long Ago.
7. Heroes And Holidays.
8. Christmas Fun.
9. Winter Is Coming.
10. Snow Time.
11. Let's Be Patriotic.
12. Community Helpers.
13. My Home And Family.
14. Children Around The World Go To School.
15. My Friends At School.
16. I Am A Good Citizen.
17. Let's Take A Trip.
18. Food, Clothing And Shelter.
19. Birds Of Springtime.
20. Birds Of Winter.
21. Queer Birds.
22. Turtles And Fish.
23. Life In The Zoo.
24. The Air Around Us.
25. You Will Go To The Moon.
26. Prehistoric Life And Times.
27. Books For Everyone.
28. Our Pets.
29. Growing Things.
30. Summer Fun.
31. Magnets And Their Power.
32. On The Farm.
33. Springtime Is Baby Animal Time.
34. The Wind And The Weather.
35. The Sun And Its Power.
36. Here Comes The Circus.
37. Children Of Many Kinds And Places.
38. Spring Flowers.
39. Simple Machines.
40. Sounds We Hear.
41. Health And Safety.
42. Places Near And Far.
43. People Travel In Many Ways.
44. The Size And Shape Of It.
45. Story Book Friends.
46. Electricity And Me.

PS 006276

ACTIVITIES FOR UNIT WORK

It is important that teachers encourage those activities that help to foster social and intellectual growth. These may be individual or group projects and may be of long or short duration. Whatever their nature, such activities serve to stimulate interest, to encourage freedom of expression, to expand the child's general background of knowledge, and to develop individual and group skills. In planning activities, teachers need to observe the following criteria:

I. Units should develop varying skills or competencies in the following areas:

   A. Language arts (stories, poems, reading and writing).

   B. Number concepts.

   C. Social concepts.

   D. Science.

   E. Art.

   F. Music.

   G. Games and rhythms.

II. Units should meet the interests of every pupil in some way.

III. Units should have a variety of introductory activities:

   A. Discussions to find out what the class knows and what it would like to discover.

   B. Exhibits of any material suitable to the unit.

   C. Collections of books pertinent to the unit.

   D. Panoramas of pictures relevant to the unit.

   E. Walks and trips to stimulate interest.

   F. Suitable filmstrips or films.

IV. Unit activities may be expressed through the following:

   A. Murals made with:

      1. Paint.
      2. Chalk.
      3. Torn paper.
      4. Cut-outs.

5. Silhouettes.
6. Realia (actual leaves, nuts, berries, etc.)
7. Sponge painting.
8. Tissues or crepe paper.
9. A combination of the mediums listed.

a. Murals may be composed of:

(1) One large picture.
(2) Sections (each made by a different child).
(3) Related items (mural, map, individual pictures).
(4) Panorama of pictures.

B. Other art forms:

1. Sketches.
2. Friezes.
3. Designs.
4. Posters.
5. Decorations.
6. Scenery.
7. Illustrations.
8. Cartoons.

C. Dioramas:

1. Displays on tables or counters.
2. Peep show boxes.

D. Charts:

1. To arouse interest.
2. To relate an experience already enjoyed.
3. To give information:

a. Picture charts.
b. Rebus writing charts.
c. Word charts.
d. Story charts.
e. Experience charts.
f. A combination of these.

E. Puppets:

1. Stick puppets.
2. Paper bag puppets.
3. Papier mache puppets.
4. Paper plate puppets.
5. Soap or detergent bottle puppets.
6. Stocking puppets.

F. Booklets:

1. Class.
2. Small group.
3. Individual.

G. Group activities:

1. Applesauce party.
2. Bread making.
3. Butter churning.
4. Ice cream churning.
5. Cookie baking.
6. Lemonade party.
7. Popcorn party.
8. Breakfasts.
9. Fruit cup party.
10. Tossed salad party.

H. Trips: (See "All About Trips")

I. Exhibits and displays:

1. Art objects.
2. Pictures.
3. Posters.
4. Bulletin board displays.
5. Textiles.
6. Flowers.
7. Shells.
8. Stones and rocks.
9. Fall realia.
10. Insects and butterflies.
11. Weeds.
12. Clothing.
13. Foods.
14. Toys of many lands.
15. Miniature modes of transportation.
16. Woods.
17. Metals.
18. Any others of child interest.

J. Television shows, films and filmstrips.

K. Plays or skits.

L. Mystery boxes and surprise boxes.

M. Special music:

1. Songs pertinent to the unit.
2. Dances.
3. Rhythms.

4. Records.
5. Special instrumental music.

N. Building:

1. With boxes, cartons or cardboard.
2. With wood or plywood.
3. With plastic materials.
4. With a combination of these.

a. Use to make:

(1) Simple houses, stores, furniture, trains, boats, trucks or planes.
(2) Cages, housing for pets and other animals.
(3) Containers for toys, balls and collage.

O. Modeling with clay or plaster of Paris:

1. Animals.
2. Dishes.
3. Jewelry.
4. Plaques.
5. Toys.

P. Sewing:

1. Wall hangings.
2. Simple doll clothes.
3. Head bands.
4. Bean bags.
5. Stuffed toys.
6. Costumes.

Q. Paper and cardboard construction:

1. Place mats.
2. Designs.
3. Puppets.
4. Scrapbooks.
5. Booklets.
6. Posters.
7. Masks.
8. Mobiles.
9. Ornaments.
10. Decorations.
11. Dioramas.
12. Panoramas.
13. Containers.
14. Shadow boxes.

R. Using collage:

1. Yarn.
2. Chalk.
3. Buttons.
4. Cork.
5. Wire.
6. Pipe cleaners.
7. Paper scraps.
8. Cloth.
9. Wood scraps.
10. Beads.
11. Any discarded materials.

S. Dramatic play.

T. Role play.

AN EVALUATION SCALE FOR UNIT WORK

To judge a unit, ask yourself to what extent the unit:

1. Clearly states objectives?
2. Provides activities for each stated objective?
3. Represents a re-occurring life situation?
4. Meets the needs or challenges the interests of the class?
5. Encourages future study of or interest in the subject?
6. Provides for student participation in planning so that work can proceed without the teacher's constant direction?
7. Enables the learner to proceed from the known to the unknown?
8. Provides for differences in interests and abilities?
9. Makes use of materials and activities which represent resources of the local community?
10. Lends itself to materials which cut across subject matter lines?
11. Includes reference materials?
12. Increases the learner's competence in understanding the type of life situation involved in the unit?
13. Meets what you feel are your pupils' basic needs?